



Week of Dec. 3 – Dec. 9, 2008

America remembers Pearl Harbor

Sixty-seven years ago, the United States endured an attack on Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, that for the next 60 years—until Sept. 11, 2001—stood as the most devastating enemy attack on U.S. soil.

Like the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, the Japanese raid on Pearl Harbor has been called a defining moment in U.S. history. It caught the country by surprise, rallied its people against their attackers and thrust the nation into a long, difficult war against tyranny.

Following are facts about Pearl Harbor for you to think about as we observe this historic anniversary:

- Within hours of the surprise attack in the early-morning hours of Dec. 7, 1941, more than 2,400 Americans were dead. Five of the eight battleships at the U.S. Fleet's Pearl Harbor base were sunk or sinking, and the other battleships, as well as ships and Hawaii-based combat planes, were heavily damaged.
- By crippling the U.S. Pacific Fleet, Japan hoped to eliminate it as a threat to the Japanese Empire's expansion south.
- President Franklin D. Roosevelt declared Dec. 7, 1941, "a day which will live in infamy" and signed the Declaration of War against Japan the following day.
- Nazi Germany, which already controlled a vast empire, declared war on the United States four days after the Pearl Harbor attack.
- In the four years after the attack, all but three of the sunken ships were repaired, refitted and returned to active duty.
- The USS Arizona Memorial marks the place where 1,102 of the 1,177 sailors killed during the attack remain. The memorial was dedicated in 1962 and is visited by millions annually. Oil from the ship continues to seep out of it, and is sometimes referred to as "the tears of the Arizona" or "black tears."

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